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**Specification, Claims and Abstract
as Amended Pursuant to Rule 46 PCT.**

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Hand Stamp

The invention relates to a hand stamp having a handle which is connected, and moveable relative, to a housing for a stamp platen bracket forming a support frame, by way of a shaft so that the stamp platen bracket 10 may be moved by a vertically adjustable stem and against the force of a spring from its idle position into a printing position.

In a stamp of this kind known from German laid-open specification OS 26 15 090 the effective length of the stem may be changed by a threaded 15 portion of the stem for adjusting the stamp to stamp platens of different thicknesses. The adjustment carried out by a set ring moveable from the exterior of the stamp and connected to a threaded portion. Similar structures are known from US Patent 5,111,745 and US Patent 5,377,599. In another 20 variant known from British patent 2,226,276, there is provided a relatively complicated mechanism which may be actuated by the handle for adjusting the stamp housing.

The essential drawback of these relatively complex known structures resides in the fact that their adjustment means which are actuated from the 25 exterior may be unintentionally displaced and thus adversely affect any stamp imprint. Moreover, it is difficult to insert stamp platens of different thicknesses since it is necessary to affix adhesively in the stamp platen bracket connected to the stem.

30 The invention aims at avoiding the disadvantages of the known stamps and at providing a structurally simple hand stamp which is safe to operate. Such stamp is also to facilitate utilization of stamp platens of different

thicknesses and a simple way of mounting them. The stamp in accordance with the invention is characterized by the handle being connected to the housing of the stamp platen by means of a flexible folding bellows which preferably is integrally formed with the handle, and by being provided with a

5 removable cap which permits access to the adjustable stem, and by a receptacle for the stamp impression member being releasably connected to the stamp platen by a snap connection.

The structure in accordance with the invention prevents unintentional

10 displacement of the stamp, and at the same time it allows a user to mount the stamp impression member as a pre-fabricated pre-inked member the first time he is using the stamp and precisely to set its vertical position without any possibility of soiling his fingers. The different positions or thickness of the impression member are compensated by the flexible folding bellows.

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In accordance with a further embodiment of the invention, the receptacle, prior to mounting the impression member on the stamp platen, is stored in a transport case which frictionally fits into the opening of the housing frame. During first use of the stamp the stamp impression member

20 receptacle may be connected to the stamp platen by the snap connection when the platen is moved downwardly, without the user soiling his fingers by touching the impression member.

Furthermore, the snap connection makes it possible, if necessary,

25 subsequently to exchange the stamp impression member for a different stamp impression member, with the aid of a tool.

30 Preferably, for purposes of being supplied at a later time, as a replacement or as a specialty item, the bottom of the stamp impression member is protected by a cap which may be removed from the receptacle.

Further characteristics and advantages of the invention will become

apparent from the ensuing description of preferred embodiments with reference to the drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a view in axial section of the stamp as supplied prior to its first
5 use;

Fig. 2 is a section along line II - ii in Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is an axial section of the stamp in operation; and

Fig. 4 is a section through the stamp platen and shipping case.

10 As shown in Figs. 1 to 3, the stamp is provided with a housing 1 forming a rectangular positioning frame 1'. The housing 1 is adapted to receive a stamp impression member 2 mounted on a platen 3 which is connected to an actuating handle 5 of the stamp by means of a stem 4. A flexible folding bellows 6 is arranged between the handle 5 and the housing 1.
15 Preferably, the flexible bellows 6 is integrally formed with the handle 5 and made by injection molding from plastic.

A threaded portion 4' of the stem 4 is threadedly received in a threaded portion 5" of an internal axial sleeve 5' of the handle 5 and may be adjusted
20 from the interior of the handle 5 for adjusting the length of stroke of the stamp. To this end, the handle 5 is provided with a removable cap 5". As shown in the drawing, the threaded portion 4' of the stem 4 is surrounded by a helical spring 7 which biases the handle 5 upwardly with respect to the housing 1.

25 As may be further seen in Figs. 1 and 2, a tub-like transport case 8 for the impression member 2 seated in a receptacle 9 is frictionally secured by snap elements 8', 1" in the opening of the housing 1. In this manner, the bottom of the stamp is sealed during transport or storage until it is used for
30 the first time.

The impression member receptacle 9 is mounted on the platen by a

snap-fit connector. To this end, the platen 3 is pressed downwardly by the handle 5 and the stem 4 within the housing 1 frictionally positioned on the protective cover 8 until the receptacle 9 snaps into the platen 3 by means of snap-fit elements 3', 9'. The transport case 8 is removed from the housing 1,

5 and the stamp is then in condition for use. Thus, the stamp impression member 2 may be mounted without the user having to touch it.

As shown in Fig. 4, the transport case 8 in which the receptacle 9 is seated is covered by a protective cap 10 for supplying new stamp impression

10 members 2.

The invention makes it possible to use differently shaped pre-inked impression members and to exchange them, if necessary with the aid of a tool, as a result of the snap-fit connection of their receptacles in the platen. In

15 the receptacle 9, the stamp impression members may be divided into several sections, to allow printing different patterns and/or colors. Figs. 1 to 3 show an impression member 2 which is divided into four sections by separators 9".

By removing the handle cap 5" the stamp may be placed upside down

20 so that it may be inked or its impression member changed with the aid of a tool.

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